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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/092,503	03/08/2002	Kazuhiko Wataya	0171-0829P	1264
2292	7590	05/18/2004	EXAMINER	
BIRCH STEWART KOLASCH & BIRCH			AHMED, SHEEBA	
PO BOX 747			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
FALLS CHURCH, VA 22040-0747			1773	

DATE MAILED: 05/18/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/092,503	WATAYA ET AL.	
Examiner	Art Unit		
Sheeba Ahmed	1773		

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION IS: [REDACTED]

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 25 February 2003.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-15 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1,2 and 4-15 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) 3 is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f):
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 2/2/04.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____ .

5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)

6) Other: ____ .

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

1. Amendments to claims 1, 3, 4, 12, 13, and 15 have been entered in the above-identified application. **Claims 1-15 are now pending.**

Specification

2. The specification is objected to as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. See 37 CFR 1.75(d)(1) and MPEP § 608.01(o). Any amendments to the claims should have clear support or antecedent basis in the specification for the new terms appearing in the claims. This is necessary in order to insure certainty in construing the claims in the light of the specification, Ex parte Kotler, 1901 C.D. 62, 95 O.G. 2684 (Comm'r Pat. 1901). In this case, the average particle diameter range now recited in claims 1, 12, and 15, the D90 value now recited in claim 3, the D10 value now recited in claim 4, and the firing temperature value now recited in claim 13 do not find support in the Specification and hence the Specification should be amended to provide proper antecedent basis for these values and ranges.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. Claims 1, 2, and 4-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Tajima et al. (US 5,061,560).

Tajima et al. disclose spherical grains of rare earth oxides (Column 1, lines 8-10) having a mean grain diameter of about 20-300 microns (Column 1, lines 56-58). The rare earth oxides employed may be selected from La, Ce, Pr, Nd, Sm, Eu, Gd, Tb, Dy, Ho, Er, Tm, Yb, Lu, Y, or Sc. Oxides of Y are preferred (Column 1, lines 65-68 and Column 2, lines 1-2). Example 1 shows that the agglomerated spherical grains have a mean grain diameter of 49.5 microns and the grain diameter distribution of 20 to 80 microns. The grains may be formed into a disk plate and baked at a temperature of 1700°C. The resulting body had a density of 4.9 g/cc (Column 2, lines 55-68). The grains have a bulk density of 1.2 to 2g/cc (Claim 8) and the grains are formed by preparing a slurry of a rare earth oxide powder having a mean grain diameter of 1 micron or smaller. All limitations of claims 1, 2, and 4-15 are disclosed in the above reference.

Allowable Subject Matter

4. Claim 4 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Response to Arguments

5. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1, 2, and 4-15 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection. The rejection of claims 1-15 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Tsukatani et al. (US 6,576,354 B2) has been withdrawn given that the Applicants have perfected their right to foreign priority.

Conclusion

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Sheeba Ahmed whose telephone number is (571)272-1504. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 9am to 5:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Paul Thibodeau can be reached on (571)272-1516. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only.


Sheeba Ahmed
Art Unit 1773
May 14, 2004